The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home

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Gather up the Fragments.

Because thou art not bid to share Life's feast,
Scorn not the crumbs that from the table fall;
If not for thee the wondrous meal, at least
The baskets full of fragments are for all.
Because the Fates withhold the wine of Joy,
Let not thy heart in angry pride disdain
The humbler cup they proffer, nor destroy
The springs of crystal water which remain.
No lover near, be glad that friends are kind;
No stored wealth, accept with thankful mind
The daily bread: no poet's crown of joys,
Be happy if the gentle few should praise
The poor attempt:—in all subdue thy soul
To grasp the Part, when Fate denies the Whole.

Jessie Leete.

Life of Life.

"What's that, which, ere I spake, was gone,
So joyful and intense a spark
That, whilst o'erhead the wonder shone,
The day, before not dull, grew dark?
I do not know; but this I know,
That had the splendour lived a year,
The truth that I some heavenly show
Did see could not be now more clear.
This know I, too; might mortal breath
Express the passion then inspired,
Evil would die a natural death,
And nothing transient be desired;
And error from the soul would pass,
And leave the senses pure and strong
As sunbeams. But the best, alas!
Has neither memory nor tongue!"

A Religion of Trust.

"They also serve, who only stand and wait."

The discipline of life sometimes puzzles our understanding, quite as much as it baffles our will. For the time it makes us not stronger, but weaker; not confident, but tearful: it does not lift us up, but humbles us under an overwhelming sense of failure and disappointment. We stand ready, but have to wait. We try, but break down helplessly. We form plans and hopes—only to be thwarted and renounced. We set our heart upon some task, which seems the one thing most needing to be done—only to find it slipping from our hands. We launch our little bark bravely; but it is cast all adrift by some stroke of the impenetrable, mysterious, inexorable Power, that works its sovereign will with us.

Now the lesson of practical duty is, commonly, very plain and simple; and its practice is not, commonly, very difficult. It is, to serve the daily service of our life in the station where we are; to take its situations as they come, for our opportunity; or, at some critical moment, to act, to dare, to say the right word, to do the right thing, and so win the post where we can do some higher and harder thing that may be claimed of us after-

wards. But there is another lesson, deeper and not so plain. It is the lesson of perfect resignation and trust, when the time comes to wait; to suffer; to be defeated, misunderstood, or laid by as useless; to linger in sickness or mortal pain; to see the hopes of life crushed, its activities baffled, and its lines of service cut off.

As life is laid out in its main courses for most of us, the time comes for both, and each comes naturally in its place. The discipline of life is a very different thing for a strong man in the flower of his years, and for the same man crippled by accident, smitten by disease, or bowed with the weight of age. The easier lesson is what we are to learn first,—to spend our strength in willing obedience, serving God's law and man's need with our best fidelity. As Milton, in the flush of his young hope, said at twenty-three:—

"Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Towards which Time leads me, and the will
of Heaven:
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master's eye."

The other, harder lesson comes afterward,—that which he had learned by heart at length, in blindness, old age, loneliness, penury and pain:—

"God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts. Who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best.
His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest.
They also serve, who only stand and wait.

We may have thought of this sometimes, when we have seen it in those we honoured and loved, who have grown old before us, or have fallen sick among us: how tenderly, how thoughtfully, how reverently we have been moved to feel towards them, seeing in their lives how well the first lesson of brave fidelity had been practised; how hardly and painfully that other lesson of patient trust had to be learned at last, through long waiting, pain, decrepitude, and tears! Not lightly—not lightly—but oh how wisely and kindly, when we learn at length to see it as we ought, does the Lord of our life lay on us the burden of His yoke, and comfort us by His rod and staff, and bid us come to Him—to Him—that we may find rest!

As one comes on to middle life, or past it, his thoughts might often take a turn like this: "I have been led all along," he might say, "by a Hand that I did not see, in a path I did not know. I seem to see, now, that it has been very little any choice of mine what post I should stand in, what work I should do, the sort of success I should find, or the sort of trial I should bear. I seem to have accepted these things, not chosen them. I should not have chosen so. I should have marked out beforehand something very different. But I see that it is better for me now, than if I could have had my own way. And for what of it is left I will trust, as I might have trusted for what is past already."

So he might say to himself—and wisely. None of us can take the full measure of His powers beforehand. None of us can guess what successes, losses, crosses, and gains will come to him; what accidents he must encounter; how his own will must clash with the wills of other men. All these, which make so sharply marked and so large a figure in the pattern of life as we look back at it, are out of sight; they are not to be seen, they are not to be guessed at, when we try to anticipate what that pattern will be. Do our very best to forecast and judge and determine, there is the wide margin, which is quite beyond our eye to see or our power to control. We may hoist the sail, and govern the helm, and study the laws of the elements that bear us on. But, when we are once afloat, it is the infinite deep below and the infinite space around. The two oceans, of wave and wind, hold us between them in an embrace we cannot quit; and our surrender to them, in the last resort, is as absolute, helpless, and complete, as that of the child, who is hushed by their rocking, or frightened by their roar and swell!

It is good for us now and then, to fall back on this thought of our direct, personal relation to the Infinite Power that sustains our life. If any of us were asked, "What is the most important thing you can imagine or

desire, for the well-being of the one person you hold dearest—the child of your love, the cherished companion of your life?"—I think he could not fail to answer, in substance, this: *To be on right terms with that Infinite Power.* This one answer we may put in a variety of ways. It might mean health, success in life, a congenial occupation, an honourable position, happiness in general. But take it only on its religious side. Some will put it doctrinally, and say it is the assurance of forgiveness, acceptance, salvation, on the terms God has been pleased to reveal in his holy Word; and they are right. Some will say, philosophically, that it is a conscious harmony with the all-enfolding Spirit, and the laws of universal Life, as we come to know them; and they are right. Some will call it, morally, simple fidelity to Truth and Duty, as it comes clear to the heart and conscience; and surely they are right. But all mean, at bottom, the same thing which may be still better said religiously,—that is, practically, in the simplest, plainest way. It is, the surrender and trust of the soul, childlike, to a Power which we are sure has a right to govern, and will not command for nought,—the surrender of perfect obedience, or else the surrender of perfect trust.

Now I do not know whether your mind, whether my mind, whether any man's mind, is able to reconcile (as we call it) our philosophy and our faith,—the facts of our life with what we believe, or have been taught, of the universal wisdom and the Eternal love. I should rather think not. But this I know: that the space between them *is bridged over,* in the experience of a right-minded and true-hearted man. When he comes to the point where he must meet God's angel (as it were) face to face, in a narrow way, where neither can turn out, he must fling his theories away, and submit himself just like a little child.

That is the way in which the Lord of our life chooses to receive us. I do not say that he picks out a subject here and there to exercise in this way, experimenting (as it were) with various and doubtful result upon the human heart and destiny. But only this: that, in the broad conditions of human life as we find them established here and now, there are certain great constant facts—among them joy, love, hope; and among them also disappointment, grief, care, and pain—which occur so often, and on so large a scale, that we cannot fail to trace in them some special service in the moral discipline of the soul.

To speak here only of a single one. Have we ever felt that shrinking and awe which comes upon the heart, when it is upon the threshold of untried duties, or under the shadow of an impending sorrow? Then let us try to see what was in part the Divine signification of it to us. It was, to put our mind in a position that makes such words as those before quoted natural and true words to us. They profess to tell us nothing of the utterly inscrutable designs of God. They only speak the mood in which the mind accepts them. They tell the faith, without which the heart would break, or consume itself in its lonely agony.

That faith may be an intelligent faith, when we have learned more of Him in whom we have believed; when we know that "He is able to keep that which we have committed to Him," for the day when such secrets will be revealed. But often, again, it will be a *blind* faith: blind, as when my poor little bandaged and suffering child once put her hand in mine, and I led her blindfold through the streets of a strange city. It is absolute, entire, unquestioning: it cannot stay to question: else it is only weakness and doubt. The soul by its own effort and prayer must win it, in the conflict with passion and infirmity, and the struggle against despair.

"They that are sick" need a physician, not just now a physiologist. When the act of surrender has come, when the soul's health is in some degree restored, then it will be time to set about the task of interpretation. Just now, everything is staked on the previous process of reconciliation. And for this we need, as the first condition, a submission as absolute, as complete, as when one with a bruised and broken frame puts himself in the surgeon's hands, and then resigns himself to sleep, that Nature's healing process may go on unhindered.

As for the ills of life we meet, I am the last to counsel any bare, unintelligent sub-

mission to them. I say, Bear them like a man if you must; while I also say, Contend against them like a man while you can. Study them, intelligently as you may, to see how you may shield yourself or others from them.

But the time may come—it may come any day to me; I know it has come to some of you—when these are all vain, untimely, and barren words. And, by the laws of the soul's constitution, by the lessons of all human experience, I know that the only wisdom then is trust. Faith is then just what the Scripture says it is: "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen,"—the only evidence they can have as yet. It is the very beginning of the higher life in us. It is the first step, implied in all that follows. It is that without which any religion at all, any comfort, any peace, would be impossible.

And finally, what does that faith declare? Simply this, that *the soul is safe at last, in a life whose law is truth and whose end is peace.*

Do I mean by this that God's dealings are always gentle with us? that His yoke is always easy and His burden light? No: it is not by indulgence and ease that he rewards His faithful ones. The reward he promises is to give them a larger measure of fidelity; ability to do more and suffer harder things; more spiritual strength and light. The very triumph of faith is often in the despair and abandonment of all that has made the earthly joy of life.

If in the painful parts of our experience we should ever question how the wisdom or justice or love of God is seen in human life, then let the answer be already familiar to us, and learnt by heart beforehand—that *difficulty and not ease, toil and not rest, suffering and not relief* is the portion he assigns often to those nearest his own heart, because so the deeper law of the spirit of life in them is made manifest. It is a higher and nobler thing to obey a summons to peril and pain and toil, than one which promises ease, security, and delight. These are the blessings we instinctively crave—for ourselves, perhaps; at any rate for those we love best. But God does not so judge for us. Often, indeed, "he giveth His beloved sleep," which is forgetfulness of care and pain; and he gives it to them all at last. But oftener, again, he giveth hardship, that the soul may ripen its better strength; grief and loss, that it may be driven to throw itself utterly into His arms, and so learn to bear the consecrated cross. "Soldiers!" said a patriot captain to his little company of banished men, "in recompense of the love you bear your country, I offer you hunger, thirst, cold, wounds, and death. Who accepts the terms? let him follow me!" The enthusiastic legion, we are told, followed him to a man. That is the temper, I think, which the Lord of our life likes to see in those whom he summons to his service.

JOSEPH H. ALLEN.

Ibsen's "Third Kingdom."

The one thing needful in life is the maintenance of a certain spirit, not a set of principles or generalizations which can be considered as final. Nothing is final except it be that the Spirit is all that matters—the Spirit which is infinite, always accepting any new truth and relinquishing the old so soon as it has become inadequate. And perhaps the best training in this attitude of mind lies in Science, so that, whatever may be the results one may ever see of one's work in it, it will yet keep one in that attitude of mind through which alone anything of real good can be achieved.

Ibsen speaks of a "Third Kingdom," which is neither that of the flesh nor that of the spirit, and yet both; neither of Beauty nor of Truth, and yet both; the consumation and harmony of its imperfect predecessors (Paganism and Christianity, or the Flesh and the Spirit), towards which all rebels against what *is* have dimly felt their way, which none can describe because none have seen the unborn.

This "Third Kingdom," then, the outcome of the other two, and greater and truer than either, is the highest aim for which any human being can work. The results of

Science (Truth) must be transfused by Spiritual Insight (Beauty) if they are to yield us that inner harmony which the world hungers for. But this Insight must be *founded* on the method and results of Science. Men of Science are usually of that temper of mind which is content to stop short of the Insight (or does not even acknowledge its existence), poets and moral reformers are impatient of the slow methods of Science, and set it aside in favour of their Insight, which they deem higher (not seeing that the highest function of this very Insight is to tell us what it sees *after taking the Visible as its starting-point*, not overlooking the smallest fact or law therein. What we need, therefore, in these days, when we have to reconstruct the Spiritual apart from religious forms which have grown into "catchwords," is that our men of the most exact science should also be poets. This would need the rarest combination of gifts—a combination which perhaps Gœthe has the most nearly approached, though in him the balance was not even, the poetical outweighing the scientific side.

Still, those of vastly smaller poetical and scientific powers than Gœthe may yet strive to advance this "Third Kingdom." They may gain a thorough knowledge of some one branch of science, and with this foundation, anything written from the poetical side of their natures will of necessity be of infinitely greater worth than it could be without this foundation, especially anything relating to the question of the relation of the sexes, which may be called the very battle-ground of Flesh and Spirit, wherein the establishment of the "Third Kingdom" would open out a whole new future to humanity. But let them at once face the fact that the acceptance of a great aim of this sort *involves building for Eternity*, not for time. If we build for Eternity, nothing short of the highest, *i.e.*, the Infinite, will content us. We shall set aside visible results as a necessary part of our scheme, and shall believe that no beginning is lost. If Death should overtake us before we have attained to any visible results at all, we can but die in trust that somehow our work has been part of a vaster scheme which we shall still be allowed to labour at, Death being only an *incident*, interrupting our course momentarily. If, on the other hand, we build for Time, and cannot throw ourselves in trust on the continuity of our spiritual life after death, we shall be hungry for visible results, to comfort us with the feeling that, if death ends all, we have at least left something behind us. But in this case the question obstinately recurs, "Why build at all, if only for Time, for beings as perishable as ourselves?" This view leads to despair, pessimism; the other, though difficult to hold at all times, especially at seasons of illness and depression, when faith is weak within us, and we long for something to point to as a result of all our labour—long also for rest and extinction rather than continued life—is yet surely the nobler and more inspiring. For the *quality* of whatever we do in its spirit will partake of the Infinite, and will therefore satisfy and uplift the souls of men as work done under the shadow of possible extinction can never do.

Should anyone ask "How is this Third Kingdom, even if attained, of any practical value?" What should we answer? Simply this: That the supreme need of humanity (beyond food, clothes, or anything of that sort) is that the mystery of life should be lightened. Once establish an inner harmony of the soul, release it from fear and paralyzing doubt, and everything of importance would flow naturally from it—purer human relationships, fairer modes of life, advance in Love and Light. To have helped in ever so slight a degree towards this end, is to have helped in the greatest work on earth.

Herder's favourite motto, "Light, Love, Life," takes on an added meaning in the light of such considerations as the foregoing.

Once we see that true life is only to be won through the union of Light and Love, we shall no more draw a dividing line between the Intellect and the Senses and the Spiritual in us, but shall consecrate our *whole being* to the service of the Highest—the untrodden paths yet possible for us, when the

ancient discord between Flesh (with which religious people are now too apt to class Intellect), and Spirit shall be laid to rest.

The difference it would make if once those old stumbling blocks of Matter and Spirit were generally admitted to have no existence (as Science is more and more tending to show)—Life might then be a harmony, avoiding equally the two extremes (and consequent half-truths) of asceticism on the one hand, and sensualism on the other, because each would be seen to interfere with the rightful activity of the *whole* man. Then would half the controversies of the day, resting on the supposed antagonism of Secular and Religious, be laid to rest; the energy and ardour of conviction thus set free would flow into *positive* channels, and the new and fairer modes of life thus possible can be as yet only dimly imagined.

We are now too much in conflict with others and with ourselves to join hands in the larger interests of humanity: imagine an inner harmony of the individual, and how great would be the change!

DOROTHEA HOLLINS.

George Macdonald.

On Monday, Sept. 18th, George Macdonald, one of the most picturesque figures, and one of the loveliest souls of the 19th century, passed away from the twilight here to the fuller light beyond. "I am growing old, and it is time to be going home," he wrote some years ago. He was 81 years of age, and for the last three years had been a secluded invalid. He had done a long and a brave day's work, and now it is good to think of him as one who made truth attractive, and goodness beautiful, and love lovely, not only by all he wrote but, better still, by what he was himself. During the "seventies" it was my pleasure to know him intimately. He preached and lectured frequently in my church at Leicester, he stayed in my house, and I used to think him the most Christ-like man I had ever known. There was something very winning and captivating about him, and one felt tenderly towards him almost as to a woman. He was the flower of kindness and courtesy to poor and rich alike, and the very servants of the houses where he was entertained felt it a privilege to attend him. There was a certain atmosphere about him which made evil things impossible in his presence. "Nor dared the Serpent at thy side to flicker with his double tongue." Those who heard him while their natures were yet plastic and their mental nerves trembled under the slightest breath of divine air, will never cease to feel and say—

Was never eye did see that face,
Was never ear did hear that tongue,
Was never mind did mind his grace,
That ever thought the travel long;
But ears and eyes and every thought
Were with his sweet perfections caught.

Macdonald's early life was like that of many another Scotch "laddie." He has depicted a good deal of it in his novels *Alec Forbes* and *Robert Falconer*, and in his poem *The Hidden Life*. It used to be the ambition of every Scotch family to send one son into the ministry. Born in a devout household, and early giving promise of quite uncommon gifts, Macdonald was sent to the University of Aberdeen in preparation for that calling. Like other Scotch lads of his class he studied in the winter, and in the summer worked on the farm.

Four long years his life swung to and fro,
Alternating the red gown and the brown coat.

(The "red gown" all students wore then at the University, the "brown coat" on the farm.) He further helped to support himself in the frugal Scottish way by taking pupils while working for his own degree. From Aberdeen he went to the Independent College at Highbury, London, and from thence, in 1850, to the pastorate of a little Independent Church at Arundel. Strange to say, and yet not strange, he was unsuccessful as a minister among the Independents. He was before his time. His mysticism and his strange opinions alarmed the congregation, so that at the end of three years the position had become impossible. One of his friends has left a striking picture

GEORGE MACDONALD AND HIS FAMILY IN 1876.

of him as he laboured in Arundel,—"The tall form, the blue and dreamy eyes, the full beard, the long hair, the appearance at once weird and winning, was a familiar sight in the streets, and the older inhabitants delight to recall how to something of the knight-errant, he added true chivalry, tenderness for suffering, scorn of insincerity and strong love of right." But his theological doctrines were too uncanny for Congregationalism in 1852, however popular now. He had to find a sphere for his teaching, and a chance of daily bread in literature. It was a hard struggle to keep the wolf from the door. He removed to Manchester, where he preached to a handful of people in a bare, comfortless room. Yet in the most adverse circumstances his faith was as perfect as that of a little child. I once asked him how he came to write the delightful child's song, "Little White Lily," and he replied that it was on one of the darkest days of his Manchester life when he and his wife were playing with their first-born child, that the child's innocence and trust brought to his mind the lilies of the field, and their lesson of trust in Divine Providence, and sitting down at the table he wrote the song just as we have it—

Little white Lily
Sat by a stone,
Drooping and waiting
Till the sun shone.
Little white Lily
Sunshine hath fed,
Little white Lily
Lifts up her head.

Little white Lily
Said, "It is good,

Little white Lily's
Clothing and food."
Little white Lily
Drest like a bride,
Shining with whiteness,
And crowned beside.

Little white Lily
Droopeth with pain,
Waiting and waiting
For the wet rain;
Little white Lily
Holdeth her cup,
Rain is fast falling,
Filling it up.

Little white Lily
Said, "Good again
When I am thirsty
To have nice rain.
Now I am stronger,
Now I am cool,
Heat cannot burn me:
My veins are so full,"

Little white Lily,
Smells very sweet:
On her head sunshine,
Rain at her feet.
Thanks to the sunshine,
Thanks to the rain,
Little white Lily
Is happy again.

After Macdonald had won his footing things became easy, but it is sad and curious to remember that *David Elginbrod*, his first novel, was hawked about from publisher to publisher to the author's great discouragement. And although he won his popularity and made his income as a novelist he always said, "My business is poetry; I write novels because I have to." He was, in fact, a poet-prophet, or rather, a poet-preacher. Mr. Chesterton calls him "a sage—a sayer of things—a born maker of spontaneous texts, texts we remember for a kind of celestial wit-saying that seem like thunderbolts from heaven." He was, in truth, a Seer, and a Seer with a message. Coleridge once said to Lamb,—"Lamb, did you ever hear me preach?" "N-n-never heard you do anything else," replied Lamb with his quaint stutter. Certainly George Macdonald never ceased to preach, and his novels were not the least effective of his sermons. He was, in fact, a great religious influence.

It is said that were it not for the unexpected presence of the "Wee Frees," Calvinism in Scotland would now be a negligible quantity. John Knox, Calvin's great disciple, and a man of genius, scarcely inferior to Calvin himself, fastened Calvinism on Scotland as with rivets of steel. It may be questioned whether Geneva itself was ever so Calvinistic as Scotland under Knox and his successors. For 300 years that awful dictrinal system held Scotland in its grip, almost unquestioned. To-day, it is but a feeble echo, a mere ghost of its former self. Indeed, it is claimed by some that there is more free and liberal thought in the Scottish Kirk than in any other church in Christendom. Within the last half century Calvinism has practically disappeared, and no single influence or cause counts for so much in that time as George Macdonald. No doubt many causes have gone to produce that remarkable change; many influences have been at work to mitigate the severities of Calvinistic theology, but no single mind has done more to demonstrate to Scotchmen, aye, and to Englishmen, the moral impossibility of Calvinism than our poet-preacher. The first shrewd blow at Calvinism had been given by another poet, Robert Burns, who all his life was in violent antagonism to the doctrines of Calvin, and poured upon them a perfect lava-flood of satire. *The Holy Tulzie* and *Holy Willie's Prayer* are ferocious in their scorn. But Burns alone would never have brought Calvinism to its knees. His attack was too unrestrained, too bitter, and its force was weakened by the fact that it came from a man who was a notorious loose liver, who glorified drunkenness, and who in life and character was everything that the religious world abhorred. But in Macdonald Calvinism came face to face with an indignant saint. Men were compelled to honour him, not only as one who wore "the

white flower of a blameless life," but as one who had a passion for God and truth, a passion of joy in the following of Christ, and a passion of pity for human sin and sorrow, which sometimes made him seem as though he were a visitant from a heavenlier world than this. Now, when this man in his novels, poems, and sermons turned his sword on Calvinism, the eyes and ears of thousands were caught, who were only irritated by Burns. That a man so gracious, so captivating, one who so manifestly walked with God, and filled with the Spirit of the Master, could be so fierce against Calvinism, caused Scotland to question its long-cherished faith. For many, both ministers and lay folk, Macdonald widened immensely the religious outlook, and made religion once more sweet, reasonable, and humane. Although no professor of theology, he was in truth one of the great theological forces of his time. Brought up in the straitest sect of the Pharisees, his eager mind early began to question the doctrines he heard discussed in his home and expounded from the pulpit. Ere he left college he had ceased to be a Calvinist, and coming subsequently under the influence of A. J. Scott and F. Denison Maurice, he found his way into a nobler, sunnier faith, which by his genius he made persuasive for many. He was a pioneer of "The Larger Hope." Much that he had to teach is suggested by that quaint epitaph in his first novel, *David Elginbrod*—

> Here lie I, Martin Elginbrod:
> Have mercy on my soul, Lord God;
> As I would do, were I Lord God,
> And ye were Martin Elginbrod.

It was a simple truth which theology and churches had forgotten, that God cannot be less good than a good man; less considerate and tolerant, and merciful, and magnanimous than a true father. He said, in fact, "Trust the best instincts of your heart whenever you would gain a true idea of God." The God of so many theologies is not a God worthy to be believed in. Macdonald himself might truly be described as "a God-intoxicated man." It was as easy and natural for him to speak of the things of God in any company as to speak of the weather. It caused no surprise. It was so plainly and simply natural.

To the young who never saw or heard George Macdonald, the enthusiasm of an older generation when speaking of him may seem strange. For neither his poems, nor his novels quite tell what he was, or reveal all the secrets of his charm and power. The man was greater than his books. He was the last of the mystics, and much of his thought reads strange to an age which has made a fetish of what it calls the practical. His mind was of imagination all compact. To hear him was to feel that you had been made worth something for once. Yet how eminently practical he was about the highest things. He knew all the doubts of his time, and touched them with a wonderful hand. Doubt he taught is rarely met by argument. Faith is never the result of a syllogism, but of an experience. The great solution of doubt is in life. "The first question," said he, "is not, Do I believe aright?" but "Am I living up to the Best I know?" "Thou doubtest, and prayest, and art troubled that thou dost not believe." Hark! hark! a voice amid the quiet intense!
It is thy duty waiting thee without—

> Rise from thy knees in hope, the half of doubt—
> A hand doth pull thee—it is Providence!
> Open thy door straightway, and get thee hence:
> Go forth into the tumult and shout!
> Work! Love! with workers, lovers all about!
> From action springs alone
> The inward knowledge of true faith and love.

An Eastern parable relates that a youth meeting one whose step was free and whose face was radiant, said to him—

> What has happened to thee?
> Something beautiful passed my way.
> What was it?
> The soul of a child going up to God.

In George Macdonald, we pilgrims have met by the way Something Beautiful,—even the soul of a child on its way to God.

JOSEPH WOOD.

The Teaching of the Bible in Historical Sequence and the need for Pictures.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT A MEETING OF SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

I understand that to address this meeting of fellow teachers is a *privilege* which we are all to be allowed to exercise in turn, and that I am honoured in being among the first to pour forth upon you for a quarter of an hour or so my experiences and difficulties in Sunday School teaching.

It seems to me that Sunday School teaching has two sides—

I.—The teaching of the Bible stories of both Old and New Testaments.

II.—What one might call the *modern* side, and class under three heads.

(*a*) *Moral* lessons, illustrated, perhaps, by the lives of great men and women, *e.g.*, Abram Lincoln, Garfield, Sister Dora, etc., which have an easy personal application for the class.

(*b*) *Scientific* subjects, which mean simple lessons on natural objects for the little ones, and for the elder scholars, more or less advanced lessons—if one can give them—on Botany, Astronomy and Physical Geography.

(*c*) Lessons on literary, social and political subjects, anything that is going on at the time. To talk over current events with the elder scholars should be the most practical help to them of all.

I have always been torn in two in my endeavour to do justice to both these sides. I *want* to teach the Bible stories, but am forced to recognise the more practical *modern* side, for I suppose a deed of heroism in a wild-beast show would appeal to a small boy much more than the story of Daniel in the lions' den, because it would be within his personal comprehension, and a girl would become a more intelligent member of society if she understood something about the eclipse of the sun, than if she knew the account of how it stood still while the Israelites pursued their enemies.

The sensible teacher will, no doubt, skilfully vary and alternate the two sorts of lessons, and while keeping to the Bible stories, for the most part, with the little ones, will take a larger and more modern field for the elder ones.

I confess I am afraid of *moral* lessons, pure and simple. They are so difficult to give without boring the children, who, I find, have always plenty of little moral stories at their fingers' ends, and anticipate the climax in a most disconcerting manner, but I enjoy teaching the Bible stories and letting the moral take care of itself, which it generally does most effectively.

And there are strong arguments in favour of taking the Bible stories, for what they themselves can teach—

I.—Because they are some of the most beautiful and interesting stories in the world, and if the children do not know them, it is a great blank in their lives.

II.—So long as we have two lessons from the Bible read in Church at every service, this reading ought to be made of value to the children, and it cannot be of value to them unless they have some clue to its meaning by having learnt the Bible stories in school. I feel very strongly about this, when I notice the blank faces of the children in Church, while the Bible is read, and the delightful exceptions which sometimes occur to reward the teacher. The children catch the first words, realise that it is a chapter on which they have just had a lesson, and immediately look up to inform you of the fact with a jubilant satisfaction as great as your own.

We know so well our own experience in this, how it gradually dawned upon us that it was worth while and interesting to us to listen to the lessons in Church, because we knew what they were about, and could *put them into their proper place in the Bible history* we had learnt.

This leads me to the point I want to make, that in teaching the Bible stories, in order to get the full benefit out of it, we ought to bear in mind two things—

First: To give, as far as possible, the idea of *historical sequence*. That is the educational part, and does somewhat the same work of enlightenment as the lessons on the *modern* side I spoke of, and even the very little ones can understand and remember the stories better if they are in order, and not all jumbled up together in their little minds, so that they don't know whether Abraham or Ahab came first.

The children learn little or no history in the elementary schools. Here is an opportunity to teach them the growth of a nation, how it changed from a group of shepherd tribes, through the periods of its judges, kings and captivities, to become an industrial and commercial people, whose highest mission it was to inspire the religious life of the western world.

Second: We ought to remember that, to make the children realise the difference between Bible times and our own, we must have pictures, pictures, pictures! Otherwise how can you be surprised if—as was actually the case—a child tells you that one of little Samuel's duties was to *light the gas* in the Temple, *or*, that the Priest of Midian invited Moses to come in to tea, *or*, that Jesus was summoned to one of his works of healing the sick *by a telegram*. One child in my class was shewn a photograph of a painting by an old master. It was the picture of Christ in the manger, with the shepherds adoring, and had a group of angels in the sky, and the child remarked, "How well the angels have *took*, Miss!" Photography in the time of Christ was no anachronism to her!

I should like to spend a few minutes here in suggesting to you in some detail how one can bring home to the children my 1st point —the *historical sequence* of the Bible—in a graphic way. It is not my own idea, but having been taught myself in this way, I tried the same thing some years ago with a Sunday School Class, and found it very successful. It makes use of the room in which the children are having their lesson, and is better than any diagram or plan one could shew them, because it is always before their eyes.

The room in which I taught is a most suitable one for the purpose. It has twelve windows in pairs along each side, and at one end a large window with five divisions, each sub-divided into two. The other end has no window, but is a blank wall with a clock in the middle, and round the doorway is a high wooden screen. The plan given below will make this clear.

I said to the class "Let's pretend—(all teachers know what a fascination this pretending has for small children)—let's pretend that a very rich gentleman offered to make a gift to the school, and suggested putting stained glass in the windows, but left it to us to choose the subject for each, and we chose pictures to illustrate the stories of the Bible. In the first we must have Adam and Eve . . ," and here follows a lesson on the old, old story, and at the end of it the children are invited to fill in the stained glass window. We may try to satisfy their various claims to have this or that point illustrated which strikes the individual child's fancy, but we *must* have Adam and Eve, the serpent and the trees of Life and Knowledge, and, if possible, to please some awestruck youngster, the angel of the flaming sword in the background!

So we fill up our first eight windows, and the fireplace and space above it come opportunely to divide Canaan from Egypt, and we travel with Joseph in the merchants' caravan across this space to settle down in the new home. Four more windows illustrate this period, and again we are fortunate in our long blank wall for the forty years of wandering in the Wilderness, while the clock reminds us of Mount Sinai and the giving of the Law. The wooden screen is an ideal substitute for the walls of Jericho, and we can picture Rahab on its covered top letting down the spies in a basket for their safe return to the Israelitish camp. And so on as the ingenuity of the individual teacher may suggest. He or she will notice that there is very little proportion kept in this

plan with regard to the length of time of the respective periods, since, for example, the time from Solomon to Jesus is illustrated by two windows only, but this plan is intended rather for the younger classes of a school, and for them the period of the later kings, the prophets, and the captivities is too difficult to take much in detail. The end window is reserved for the life of Jesus, and the acts of the apostles.

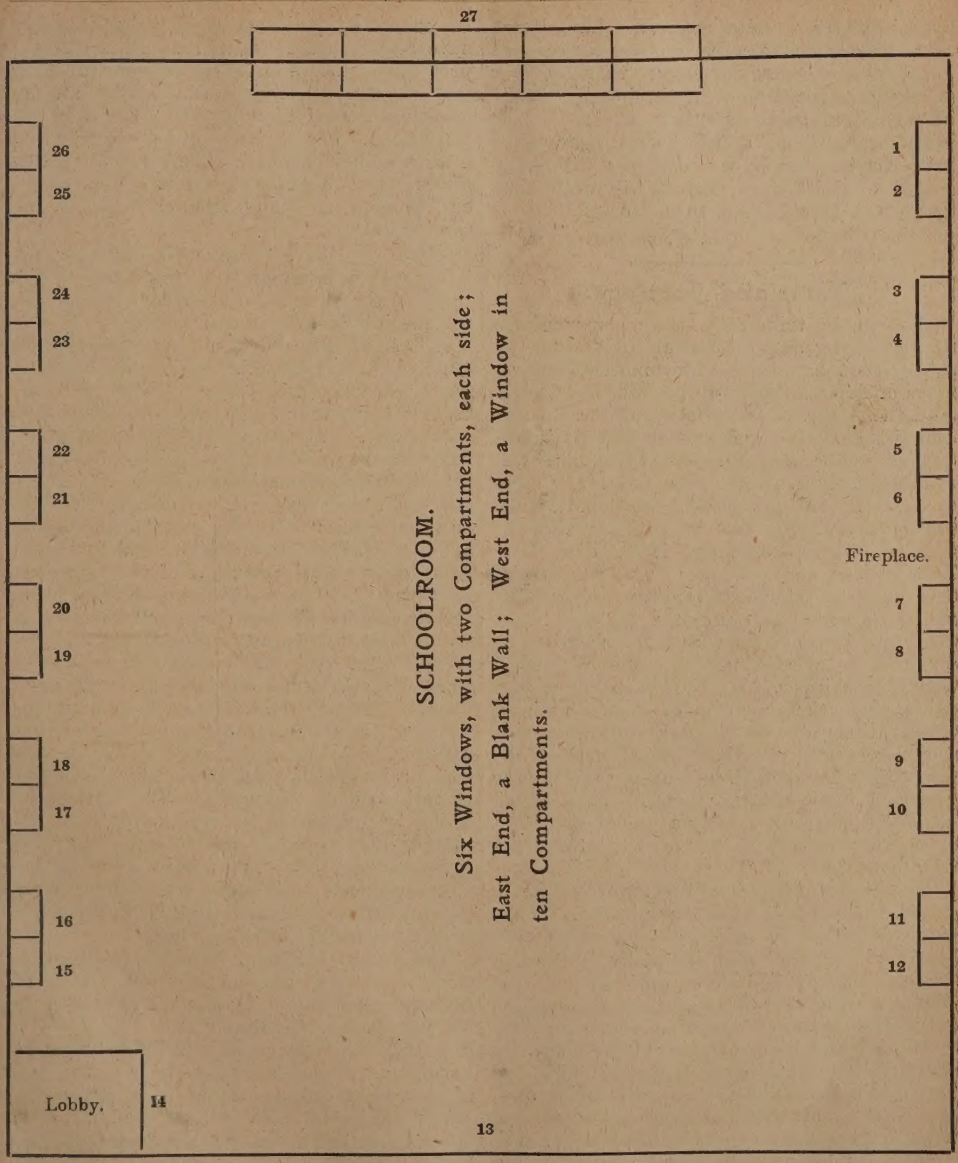
PICTURE SUBJECTS FOR WINDOWS.

1 } Adam and Eve	15 } Joshua
2 } Cain and Abel	16 } Deborah
3 } Noah and the Ark	17 } Gideon
4 } Tower of Babel	18 } Jepthah
5 } Abraham and Lot	19 } Samson
6 } Abraham and Isaac	20 } Ruth
7 } Jacob and Esau	21 } Samuel
8 } Joseph in Canaan	22 } Saul
9 } Joseph in Egypt	23 } David
10 } Moses	24 } Solomon
11 } The Plague	25 } Nebuchadnezzar
12 } The Passover	26 } Cyrus
13—Forty Years in the Wilderness.	27—Childhood and Ministry of Jesus
14—Jericho, Rahab and the Spies	

This, you see, would give the main events of Bible history in order, but it is very doubtful what pictures the children will form in their own minds and transfer to the windows if you have not good pictures to shew them as you take each lesson. My experience of available scriptural pictures in one's own home is that they are always in the heaviest book, and quite impossible to carry backwards and forwards to school. I have found advertisements useful sometimes. One can tear them out of magazines, etc., but these have their disadvantages.

I used one of the Pyramids, which was clear and suitable in size, but unfortunately placed before the Sphinx was a huge whiskey bottle—"Dewars—of great age," which necessitated an explanation to the children that it was not really there! This may rouse a dull class, but it is not quite the right thing for a Sunday School lesson! No doubt there are *light* books to be had. "Palestine Pictures" (Ernest Nister) I have found useful for its coloured illustrations, but what I should be so glad to see in all Sunday Schools is a large collection of pictures to illustrate the Bible stories. As regards size it would be well to have them large enough (say, 10 by 12 inches) for the whole class—I am supposing about a dozen children sitting in a semi-circle round the teacher—to see them at the same time. The teacher can then rest the picture on his knee and point out to the children what they should notice. This saves the disorder of passing a small picture round the class, and insures the real understanding of the illustration. Such pictures *can* be obtained from the American School and College Text Book Agency (10, Avondale Road, Croydon), but many useful ones could be collected from magazines, picture postcards, and photographs, etc., which could be mounted on cardboard and divided into sets of six or seven to illustrate each lesson. If kept in suitable cases, in a cupboard where the teachers could get them before school begins, they would be, I am sure, invaluable as an aid to teaching the children in an interesting way.

One more point I would mention in which to help the *eye* as well as the *ear*. In taking the youngest classes it is very doubtful whether it is ever worth while letting them read from the Bible round the class. Little children find reading so difficult that all their intelligence is taken up in pronouncing the words correctly, and the meaning of those words is often lost to them. On the other hand they ought to *see* as well as *hear* the names of the places and persons in the lesson, or they will go away with a very indistinct impression of what they have been learning. I have heard of a child who asked the teacher what it meant by the "bunch of violets" in the Creed. The explanation which followed brought out the fact that it was what the child had made out of the words "suffered under Pontius Pilate"! As a substitute for a blackboard, which is avail-


27
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1
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3
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5
6
Fireplace.
7
8
9
10
11
12
SCHOOLROOM.
Six Windows, with two Compartments, each side;
East End, a Blank Wall; West End, a Window in
ten Compartments.
Lobby.
14
13
Clock.
Blank Wall.

:able in so few Sunday Schools, I have found it a good plan to write out on foolscap in large letters—copybook hand—three or four of the principal names in the lesson. Make the children spell out these names on the sheet before them, and test them again after withdrawing the paper, and you will get a result so satisfactory that it will well repay the extra trouble you have taken.

L. C. H. GRIFFITHS.

Notes and Jottings.

THE public tributes to the memory of Sir Henry Irivng and his burial in Westminster Abbey show how far we have moved from the days of fierce antagonism between the Church and the Stage. The protest of the Puritan conscience against the theatre had its justification. The best friends of dramatic art would hardly deny it. But like many other protests it stiffened into conventionality and became even pharisaical. It has survived simply as a negation, and it has died hard. Indeed there are many people still who regard the theatre as a place of iniquity, and theatre-going as a sin *par excellence*, far more heinous for instance than a little cheating in business or a brisk personal quarrel with a fellow-worshipper. We know men and women with whom the tradition of antipathy is so strong, that to go to the play would seem like the reversal of all their moral habits, and while they do not wish to condemn others they speak of their own strictness in tones of evident self-approval. They expect thereby that some day it will be counted to them for righteousness.

Traditions of this kind like many low forms of life, have a very lingering vitality. They are not killed by argument, but an atmosphere of tolerance and sympathy is fatal to them. It has been the great work of Sir Henry Irving that he has done as much as any man to create this atmosphere for dramatic art and the profession of the actor. By the unflagging energy and idealism which he put into his work he has helped to bring back the theatre into popular esteem, and to convince many religious people, in spite of traditional scruples, of its usefulness for the higher ends of life. We notice that General Booth has made the quaint suggestion that it would have been better if he had used his gifts in preaching; to which it is enough to reply that every man has his special calling, and by devoting himself to it he serves God and his generation. To amuse people innocently and to elevate their sympathies and tastes by noble forms of art is social service of a high order, and we need not shrink from calling it divine service as well.

While, however, we say this and pay our tribute of admiration and gratitude to the work of the great actor, we do not overlook the special dangers of the theatre. In our recoil from the Puritan condemnation we must beware of the other and more fatal extreme. It would be better never to go to the theatre at all than to go with pleasure to see some plays. The same evil influences, which have been at work in a certain class of fiction, have infected dramatic writing as well. There is a taste for coarseness and moral vulgarity, and sometimes for things which deserve harsher epithets than these, which should never escape the censorship of the Christian conscience. Plays of this kind are degrading for those who witness them, and they must be at least as degrading for those who act them. But the true policy is not one of wholesale condemnation, but of moral judgment. Here as elsewhere we are not under the law but under grace, which means that we are not to be guided by fixed rules, and still less by popular fashion, but by the liberty of an instructed conscience. There are books which we ought not to read, and there are plays which we ought not to see, simply because they are bad for ourselves and bad for other people. It is not a question of Puritan tradition at all, but simply of the plain requirements of Christian morals.

The death of Bishop Ellicott arouses emotions of a very different kind from that of Irving. Appointed by Lord Palmerston to the joint see of Gloucester and Bristol, when some men who are now in middle life were hardly out of their cradles, he was the last of a race of scholar-bishops of a generation whose ideals of episcopal excellence, as of other things, were slightly different from our own. Possibly what we gain in versatile activity we lose in massiveness; we are not

sure that solid learning among the leaders of the Church is not as much needed now as a bulwark against clamour and ignorant prejudice. Be that as it may, Dr. Ellicott will be remembered chiefly as a New Testament scholar. He was largely instrumental in bringing the question of Biblical revision to a practical issue, and acted as chairman of the company of New Testament revisers. For these ten years of unremitting scholarly labour, carried on with rare diligence among all his other duties, English Christianity will be always his debtor. A writer in the *Manchester Guardian* tells us that six weeks before his death he was still busy revising the revision. He recalled particularly how on the Revision Committee Dr. Westcott would submit to being outvoted on a variant reading or a rendering "with a look of gentle despair, as if all our work had now been thrown away." It is a delightful touch, which kindles the latent fires in the heart of a Christian scholar, for whom every word of the Gospel has its supreme importance.

We are not alone in wishing that Dr. Ellicott's example could be followed out into a real revision of the Revised Version. It is quite clear that as it stands it is not likely to find its way into popular favour. Of course the difficulty of competing with a noble classic like the Authorised Version, hallowed as it is by the most sacred associations, is simply colossal. It has not been ignorance or prejudice that has made most people slow to discard what they dearly love. In these matters it is a virtue not to be in a hurry. But we are not sure that time is on the side of the work of the Revisers, at least there is no sign, so far as we are aware, of a slow but steady progress in its public use. The truth is that the Revision needs to be revised. It must discard some of its pedantries, and cultivate the divine harmonies of speech, before it can begin to speak to man as the most beautiful book in the English language has done for almost three centuries.

Astronomical Notes for Nov.

The apparent path of the moon, and of all the major planets, is very nearly the same as that of the sun; that is, they are never more than a few degrees north or south of the ecliptic, which is the sun's apparent path round the earth. In other words, a narrow band might be drawn round the sky, with the ecliptic in the centre, and this narrow band would contain the sun, the moon, and all the major planets. The consequence of this is, that the moon in her monthly revolution round the earth, occasionally passes in front of, and hides for a time, one of the planets. This is called an *occultation* of the planet. Certain of the fixed stars are also within this band; the chief of which are: Aldebaran, Antares, Spica, and Regulus. An occultation of Aldebaran takes place on November 13th, beginning at 6.35, and ending at 7.16. As the moon, which is nearly full, does not rise till after half-past five, it will be impossible to see the beginning, but after the occultation has ended, the star may be seen to the right of the moon. Jupiter will be visible above the moon on that night. Mars and Saturn can also be seen early in the evening in the south-west throughout the month.

News from the Field.

The *Rev. A. Thornhill* has been inducted at Carlisle under most favourable auspices, and the presence and helpful speech of the *Earl of Carlisle* would do a good deal to give the Congregation and Minister a helpful lift. Evidently bright days are in store for our good cause. The *Rev. E. Lockett*, of *Pudsey*, has accepted a call to *Denton*, where there is good work to be done. *Mr. Freeston*, of *Essex Church, London*, has been fortunate in securing as his assistant the *Rev. A. Golland, M.A.*, who will bring vigour and freshness into the work. *Newport, Isle of Wight*, has given a hearty welcome to *Rev. H. M. Livens*, whose fine abilities will have a fitting sphere. *Stockton-on-Tees* has taken the bold course of inviting to its ministry the *Rev. R. H. Maistre*, who brings a good record from the Established Church, to which he formerly belonged. The *Rev. Joseph Wood*, of *Birmingham*, is to be doubly congratulated—on the completion of twenty-one years of earnest and successful service at the *Old Meeting*, and on securing as a helper and colleague the *Rev. C. M. Wright, M.A.*, late of Oxford, who will bring a bright, fresh spirit, and traditional earnestness and devotion to the fine sphere on which he is entering.

To all these we offer greetings and good wishes.

There was an inspiriting function at *Aberdeen*, when the Memorial Stone of the new Church was laid by *Sir John Brunner, M.P.*, who was sur-

rounded by a group of Laymen and Ministers—including the President and Secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and a large body of sympathisers. Everything was cheering, and the brave-hearted Minister, the *Rev. A. Webster*, must have been encouraged, and strengthened. It is to be hoped that at the Northern outpost of the Liberal faith, the new building will be opened free of debt.

Ballycarry in the North of Ireland, has witnessed the re-opening of its old Meeting House and the instalment of its new organ, to which *Mr. Carnegie* has been a munificent contributor. The re-opening services were successfully conducted by the *Rev. T. Dunkerley, B.A.*

The Mission Station at *Barnsley* has been restarted by the *Rev. C. J. Street*, of *Sheffield*, and there seems every probability of the formation of a permanent congregation there.

The Bank Street Congregation at *Bury* has been finely celebrating the Centenary of its Sunday School. The Ministers old and new were present, and showed the deepest interest, and old Teachers and Scholars from all parts of the kingdom gathered together to prove their indebtedness to the Sunday School which has done such a noble work.

At *Mansfield*, where our friends are about to lose the valuable services of the Rev. E. J. Fripp, the Midland Association has held its annual meeting. Amid some discouragements and losses, and also some substantial gains, the Association goes on with its work with growing zeal, and looks confidently towards a more prosperous future.

Dr. Torrey has been pursuing his mission at *Sheffield*, and has renewed his ignorant and somewhat malignant attacks on Unitarians there, but the rejoinder of Messrs. *Dolphin*, *Blazeby*, and *Street* have cleared away the poisonous virus and the immediate result is the renewed activity of the congregations of the faithful and the enlargement of their numbers. *Dr. Torrey* is rapidly becoming a valuable Missionary for the Free Churches. He is an unwilling agent for the spread of a faith larger and diviner than his own.

We are glad to see the *Non-Subscribing Association*, of *Ireland*, working in the great field of Temperance Reform, and we should gladly see all our Congregations and Associations following the good example.

There have been so many and such successful Harvest Thanksgiving services throughout the United Kingdom that we have not space to chronicle them. We can only say how pleased we are that the sense of thanksgiving for the unfailing goodness of God always calls forth an outburst of joy from those who never fail to recognise the love and goodness of our Heavenly Father.

The event of the month which stands out with great prominence, and will be one of the high-water marks of our activities, is the opening of the splendid mansion and grounds of "Summerville," Manchester, as the Home of the Missionary College and a Hall of residence for lay students of the Victoria University. Fittingly the chair was occupied by the venerable President, the *Rev. C. C. Coe*, and equally fittingly, the fine buildings were declared to be open by *Sir E. Durning Lawrence, M.P.* There was a great gathering, overflowing the space devoted the meetings—an enthusiastic body who were full of zeal and quite willing to catch even the echo of the speeches delivered by the various leaders on the occasion, and also that of *Vice-Principal Hopkinson* of the University. Everything was successful and gladsome. The day so long looked for had arrived, and now, for the first time in its history, the great Institution which has done so much for the education of our Ministry, and the zeal of our Congregations found itself suitably and nobly housed, with an early prospect of the splendid sum of £20,000 being fully raised. No wonder there was a display of fire and enthusiasm to which we are unaccustomed, but which is likely to be seen more and more among us as our work and life grow in largeness of spirit, and consecration of purpose.

We once more lay our wreath on the graves of honoured men and women who have passed away from us. Some of those whose names we note belong indeed to the immortals, and have left names to be held in everlasting remembrance. The Venerable Eden Payne, Minister among us for over 60 years—always faithful, modest, and retiring—grand Sunday School Teachers and workers like *Miss Hirst*, of *Stockport*, *John Sims* of Bolton—a Labour Church worker—*T. A. Wykes*, of *Leicester*, for more than 40 years the Secretary of the Infirmary, and a good worker in many great causes, *John Keates*, of *Trowbridge*—a strong voluntary worker—and for many years Pastor of the Baptist Church, *Rushall*, *John Edward Taylor*, honorably known as the chief of the *Manchester Guardian*, and a generous helper in all good works—*Geoffry Wedgwood*, of Stone—a man worthy of his name—*Mrs. Harland*, of gracious memory because of her own goodness, and for the honoured name she honourably sustained—*Miss Slatter*, of *Brighton*, venerable, devoted, and gentle—one of the saintly souls—and among the knightliest and most gracious of our cultured and gentle Laity, *Donald Wilson, M.A.*, of *Hull*—a guileless, pure soul, who in quiet ways lived a noble life, and brought sweetness and sanctity with him wherever he went. We thank God that such as these have lived and died."

May we not number among our sainted ones George Macdonald—Poet—Preacher, Novelist, and Divine—a man among men, simple, devout, uplifting—one of the uplifting Sons of God?

SCRUTATOR.

October 18th, 1905.

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